



UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC SERVICE FORUM AND AWARDS CEREMONY

International Knowledge-sharing Workshop on
Open Government Data for Sustainable Development



22-23 June 2017

The Hague, Kingdom of the Netherlands



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Acknowledgements

This is the report of the International Knowledge-sharing Workshop on Open Government Data for Sustainable Development held in The Hague, Netherlands, from 22-23 June 2017.

The Workshop was organized by the Division for Public Administration and Development Management of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA/DPADM), under the project “Strengthening of Capacities of Developing Countries to Provide Access to Information for Sustainable Development through Open Government Data”, implemented by UN DESA/DPADM. The Workshop was organized as a side event of the United Nations Public Service Forum and Awards Ceremony.

UN DESA/DPADM expresses its gratitude to the Government of Netherlands for its collaboration in hosting the Forum and the Workshop.

UN DESA/DPADM would like to acknowledge the international participants from the governments of Bangladesh, Brazil, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Nepal, Panama, Philippines, South Korea, and Uruguay, who delivered their opinions and experiences during the Workshop and made significant contributions in the form of recommendations, information, knowledge and ideas. They enriched the discussions and successfully shaped the outcome of the event.

From UN DESA/DPADM, Ms. Valentina Resta, Senior Governance and Public Administration Officer in UN DESA/DPADM oversaw the Workshop organization and implementation, and Ms. Arpine Korekyan delivered introductory and closing remarks and provided substantive inputs during the event. Mr. Daniel Dietrich and Mr. David Zamora, as UN DESA international consultants, coordinated the design and facilitation of the workshop. UN DESA/DPADM is grateful for their significant contributions to the successful implementation of this event.

Last but not least, UN DESA/DPADM wants to thank all support staff at UN DESA/DPADM who made the workshop possible and ran behind the scenes the most challenging and important operational aspects.



Part I - Overview of the Workshop

Context

Through the project “Strengthening of Capacities of Developing Countries to Provide Access to Information for Sustainable Development through OGD”, UN DESA/DPADM supported selected governments of developing countries in applying information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance access to information through open government data for enhanced service delivery and inclusive sustainable development.

Since 2015, the following capacity development activities were carried out by UN DESA/DPADM in Latin America and Asia, in partnership with: the Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento (AGESIC) from the Government of Uruguay; the Autoridad Nacional de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información (ANTAI) and the Autoridad de Innovación Gubernamental (AIG) from the Government of Panama; the National Information Commission (NIC) from the Government of Nepal; and the Access to Information Program (a2i) of the Government of Bangladesh; with the collaboration of ECLAC and ESCAP.

- Four OGD Capacity Development Workshops
- Four National Substantive Trainings
- Three Study Tours on OGD for Sustainable Development
- Two Regional OGD Workshops for Sustainable Development

As result of these events, the OGD ecosystem of the participating countries was strengthened, capacities for government officials and civil society actors were enhanced, assessments were conducted, OGD national strategies and action plans were co-created; and OGD projects are being collaborative implemented. All under the sustainable development framework and objectives.

In this context, the International Knowledge-sharing Workshop on OGD for Sustainable Development aimed to promote an exchange of information on the development of OGD national strategies and action plans in support of access to information, transparency and accountability for sustainable development. Participants from selected countries shared experiences and lessons learned during project implementation, and also learned from innovative public administration approaches for SDG implementation being showcased during the UNPS Forum. While participants’ capacities on OGD action planning were enhanced, the Workshop also guided them to reflect on how this type of planning can maximize the impact of OGD on sustainable development, particularly on the poorest and most vulnerable.

Background and Summary of the Outcomes

The International Knowledge-sharing Workshop on Open Government Data for Sustainable Development was organized under the “Strengthening of Capacities of Developing Countries to Provide Access to Information for Sustainable Development through OGD” project. The objective of this project was to demonstrate the potential and benefits of using OGD in advancing transparency,



accountability and sustainable development in selected countries of Latin America and East Asia regions. In partnership with national counterparts, the project has been supporting the development of an OGD strategy, particularly in thematic areas relevant to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It has also been supporting the establishment of an OGD community, improving technological knowledge and skills of stakeholders, and the monitoring and evaluation of the OGD initiative.

The Workshop aimed at promoting an exchange of information on the development of OGD national strategies and action plans in support of access to information, transparency and accountability for sustainable development.

The Workshop targeted three groups of participants, namely:

- Senior and mid-level government officials who are responsible for coordinating the OGD programmes in their respective countries as well as officials from transparency, innovation, planning and other relevant government agencies. The governments of Bangladesh, Brazil, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Nepal, Panama, Philippines, South Korea, and Uruguay were represented.
- UNPSA winners and other experts including ICT experts, statisticians, and programme managers.
- United Nations officials, including from DESA, UNDP and other international organizations.

Overall Structure of the Workshop

As mentioned above, the Workshop was held as part of the United Nations Public Service Forum and Awards Ceremony. This implied that participants joined the Forum activities and participated on the Workshop during the time reserved for it. The forum was conducted from 22-23 June and the Workshop was conducted during a 3-hour lapse on the 23 June.

During the first day, participants joined one of the following eight tracks, where innovators presented their experiences and lessons:

- Excellence in delivering health services
- Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities
- Unlocking the potential of the furthest behind
- Partnerships for sustainable energy
- Cooperative management of increasing water and sea levels
- Enabling children and youth people to achieve the Agenda 2030
- Job creation and prosperity
- Circular economy: sustainable management of resources

During the second day, participants attended the International knowledge-sharing on OGD Workshop morning and lunch sessions. The first part of the Workshop included a reflection on approaches and challenges of using OGD to advance sustainable development. The second part was



devoted to a discussion of OGD strategy development milestones and countries' experiences in using OGD for promoting the achievement of the 2030 agenda.

Later in the afternoon of the second day, participants had the opportunity to observe the ministerial discussion on "how do we accelerate innovations in public service" as well as the United Nations Public Service Award Ceremony.

Some of the specific outcomes of the Workshop were the following:

1. Key conclusions and recommendations, some of which fed into the UNPS Forum outcome document.
2. Finalized OGD action plans for Bangladesh, Nepal, Panama and Uruguay.
3. The present report, produced at the end of the Workshop to summarize its deliberations, conclusions and recommendations.

Evaluation of the Workshop

The overall impression of the Workshop was categorized as positive by 91% of participants, 55% categorized it as "excellent", 36% as "very good", and 9% as "satisfactory". In addition, 100% of participants said they would recommend the event to other colleagues, and 100% of them expressed their interest in contributing to DPADM's substantive network activities.

The following topics were evaluated by all of participants as "excellent" or "very good": Selection of the Workshop themes and sessions, and Administrative arrangements and facilities. And the following topics were evaluated by 91% of participants as "excellent" or "very good": Your overall impression of the Workshop, Clarity of the workshop objectives, Overall quality of the selected speakers, and Quality of presentation made in the plenary sessions (please see the Workshop Evaluation Report for more details).

Part II - Overview of Discussions

The following section summarizes the main points of the discussions during the three sessions described above.

Session I - OGD and SDGs

The session was conducted from 10:15 am to 11:30 am, and allowed all the participants to answer two questions based on the process experienced in their countries:

1. What have you done to make OGD useful for achieving national SDGs? How are both processes connected in your country?
2. What needs to be done to make OGD work for SDGs? What approaches could you adopt to make OGD useful for the SDG agenda?



The questions served as a frame for the ensuing group discussion.

Questions: What have you done to make OGD useful for achieving national SDGs? And how are both processes connected in your country?

Participants described that one of the first actions they are implementing is coordination with the National Statistical Office, to convince them to open and share national data that is linked with the SDG indicators. Based on the coordination that these offices have with United Nations Statistics Division, National Statistics Offices have identified an important number of datasets that are being used to measure SDGs progress. The goal OGD coordinators are seeking is to enable public access to these valuable datasets and to allow the reuse of those data for advancing the SDG national agenda. In some countries, UNDP has assessed the availability of national datasets related to SDG indicators, and OGD coordinators are using those results for guiding the data opening process.

They added that the release of datasets in open format sometimes only requires coordination with the National Statistics Office, but in other cases may require regulation. The use of Presidential Decrees or Prime Minister rulings may be necessary to publish data related to SDGs indicators. However, participants recognized that in the best cases, only around 50% of datasets are available in open format.

Some participants mentioned that their governments and civil society organizations prioritized SDGs, and are focusing on the release of open data related to those prioritized goals. This approach has allowed to focus not only on the opening of data but on the reuse of those datasets.

Another shared experience was that national OGD regulation requires government agencies to prepare and implement their own OGD plans. Those agencies undertake the assignment based on instructions and guidelines prepared at the central coordination level (for example Brazil: <http://kit.dados.gov.br/>). For this reason, national OGD coordinators are working on updating those guidelines to include SDGs. They expect that specific agency plans will result in a more comprehensive approach for OGD to be used for sustainable development.

Other participants presented web sites used to track SDGs and to publish OGD related to SDGs. Some of those examples include Bangladesh: <http://sdg.gov.bd/>, Costa Rica: <http://datarepublica.org>, and Philippines: <https://www.gov.ph/data>.

Some participants agreed on the fact that the motivation for government officers to publish OGD is not always based on the value that the data has to people, but on the value that publishing data represents to them. Participants said they have estimated the time, effort and resources government officers will save if they publish open data.

There was agreement on the process OGD has followed in their countries. National OGD initiatives started with transparency, then moved either to job creation or other social problems, and are now evolving as a tool to reach SDGs.

Questions: What needs to be done to make OGD work for SGD achievements? And what approaches could you adopt to make OGD useful for the SDG agenda?



Participants started by recognizing that there is not much awareness of the SDG agenda among national actors, including government officers. The lack of sensitization creates an obvious barrier to advancing sustainable development. Thus, one of the first actions on which there was agreement was the need to sensitize national actors on sustainable development goals. The 2030 agenda must be disseminated and understood by national leaders inside and outside the government.

As a next strategic action, participants identified the creation of a governance structure for government agencies and civil society to work together. They recognized there is need for better communication and coordination among actors. Creating “sub-ecosystems” for the different SDGs can bring on-board key stakeholders and experts on the different topics, and can help them identify the key data that should be released in open format.

They also added that including key objectives and tasks related to the SDGs in the national open data guidelines targeted to officials at government agencies was one of the most feasible ways to foster adoption of the sustainable development agenda. But they also recognized that guidelines by themselves are not enough; the documentation needs to be accompanied with sensitization, training, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as strong endorsement coming from a high-level political authority.

One of the participants, describing the way his team is approaching OGD to work for SDGs achievement, said they focus on three dimensions: technology (including the national ICT infrastructure), policy (the national OGD strategy and action plan, which was created with UNDESA’s collaboration), and operation (involving all organizational issues).

A closing comment by one of the facilitators stated that to advance SDGs through the use of OGD, national stakeholders did not have to limit themselves to currently recognized SDG indicators, as those are just a means to measure sustainable development progress at the global level. To clearly approach national sustainable development needs, national stakeholders must work together and collaborate in identifying and addressing specific national problems. In that conversation, key relevant datasets will eventually be recognized and thus, become open for all.

Session II - OGD Strategy and Action Plan

The session was conducted from 11:30 am to 12:00 am, and allowed participants to answer any of the three questions below. The discussion built on these questions.

1. In the process of designing and implementing the OGD strategy and action plan, what are the main challenges you had to overcome?
2. What are the key lessons learned? Is there any room for improvement?
3. What are key innovative elements of your country’s OGD action plan in relation to public service innovation for Agenda 2030?

Question: In the process of designing and implementing the OGD strategy and action plan, what are the main challenges you had to overcome?



Based on the question, participants stated the following challenges:

- Lack of awareness and understanding the benefits of OGD
- Fear to release data, mainly because of data quality, nonexistence of required data, and fear of manipulation of data
- Weak leadership, limiting the spread and potential of OGD
- The risk to be the first one to open the data
- Lack of involvement of government agencies, having just a few agencies involved is not enough
- Lack of regulation may set OGD efforts back
- Officers at government agencies do not know what to open because they do not know what they have
- Misunderstanding of what is OGD, and thinking that having the data online is enough
- Paper-based culture

Questions: What are the key lessons learned? Is there any room for improvement?

Based on the questions, participants shared the following lessons:

- Policy and regulation should ask for OGD action plans at the agency level, which need to be accompanied with education material
- There is a need to understand what has to be centralized and decentralized, based on the national OGD needs and maturity status
- In all OGD initiatives, there is a need to consider the entire data life cycle
- Coordination is required from the very beginning with those who need and use the data
- Open data by default may not be the best approach; close collaboration with the user community to prioritize data is required instead
- Institutionalization of OGD initiative and governance structure
- Audit processes can push for open data, and accountability practices require evidence data
- There is always a need for champions inside and outside the government - some pushing for opening the data and others using that data

In terms of room for improvement, participants mainly stated two ideas: the first was the continuity of UNDESA support to national OGD initiatives, in the form of sensitization, capacity development, assessment, and monitoring. The second one was the creation of an international OGD learning platform, which could host resources for guiding actors in the use of OGD for sustainable development.

Session III - Key Steps to Advance on the OGD National Initiative

This was a lunch session, conducted from 12:15 pm to 13:20 pm. The session started by recognizing some the achievements of the participating countries:



- Community building
- Actors sensitization
- Readiness assessments
- Co-creation of strategy and action plan
- Training on opening government data
- Promoting and reusing data

After that, participants were distributed in three groups, with representatives from Latin America and Asia in each group, and participants of one same country being allocated to different groups. The groups all answered three common questions and reported their results to the other groups. The three questions were:

1. What are the key steps that need to happen to advance your OGD initiative?
2. How to make OGD an innovative process across government?
3. How to make OGD for sustainable development everybody's agenda?

Question: What are the key steps that need to happen to advance your OGD initiative?

Group 1:

- Full buy-in from leaders
- Legal framework beyond commitment of people
- Incorporation of management practices
- Improvement of ICT infrastructure
- Development of standards
- Better understanding of private sector OGD usage

Group 2:

- Regulatory framework
- Appoint a champion
- Socialize the OGD strategy
- Involve stakeholders (including the following three communities: OGD + SDG + Freedom of Information-FOI)

Group 3:

- Create more documentation to improve the OGD related processes
- Improve data quality
- Foster data reuse

Questions: How to make OGD an innovative process across government? And how to make OGD everybody's agenda for sustainable development?



Group 1

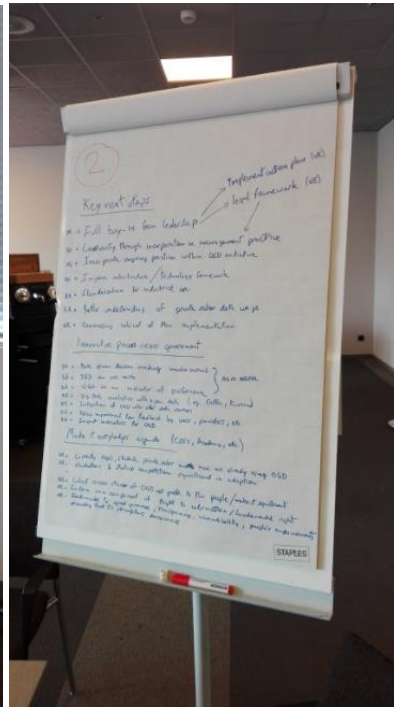
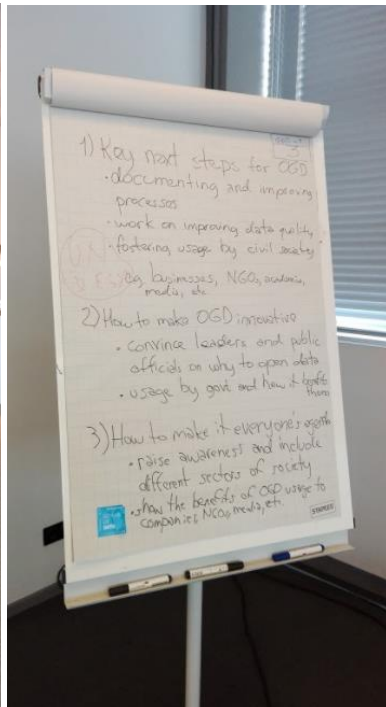
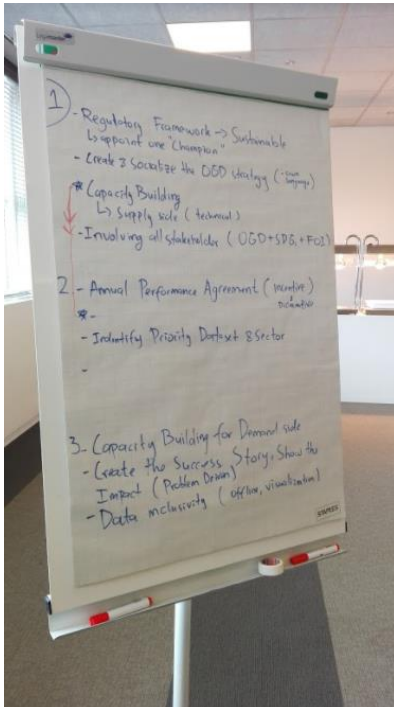
- Implement data-driven decision making mechanisms
- Generate impact indicators
- Integrate OGD with other data sources
- Collect success stories from the world to motivate OGD adoption

Group 2

- Use of annual performance agreements
- Identify priority datasets and sectors
- Build capacities on the demand side (for example, many people do not understand what is API, CSV, etc.)
- Create and document success stories driven by real societal problems
- Create an OGD bank of knowledge, with resources to share best practices

Group 3

- Convince officers on why to open data
- Promote usage from the government side
- Involve different sectors in OGD initiatives
- Show benefits of OGD among the public
- Need for UNDESA to continue guiding: assessing, building capacities, and facilitating experience sharing (as was done in this and previous regional workshops)





Annexes

1. List of Participants

Country	First Name	Last Name	Email
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2. Workshop Agenda

21 June 2017 Registration in hotels (for those unable to register on line)

22 June 2017 UN Public Service Forum and Award Ceremony

08:00-09:00	Registration
09:00-10:30	Plenary - The Future is Now: Accelerating Public Service Innovation for Agenda 2030
10:30-11:00	Break
11:00-18:00	Parallel tracks: Public Service Innovations around the world to leave no one behind 1- Job creation and prosperity 2- Excellence in delivering health services 3- Partnerships for sustainable energy 4- Cooperative management of increasing water and sea levels 5- Enabling children and young people to achieve Agenda 2030 6- Unlocking the potential of the furthest behind 7- Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities 8- Circular economy: sustainable management of resources
18:30-22:00	Dinner and cultural programme

23 June 2017

09:00-09:45 Plenary Session: How is innovation shaping the government of the future?

INTERNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE-SHARING WORKSHOP ON OGD FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

10:00-11:30	Session 1 – Approaches to OGD for Sustainable Development
11:30-12:15	Session 2 – Innovation and Lessons Learned on OGD Action Planning
12:15-13:30	Lunch and Session 3 – Key Next Steps to Advance on the OGD National Initiative

Back to UN Public Service Forum and Award Ceremony

13:45-15:30	Ministerial Conversation: From The Hague onwards: How do we accelerate innovations in public service? (Youth Declaration, Chair Summary and discussion)
15:30-15:45	Closing
15:45-16:15	United Nations Public Service Award Ceremony
16:15-18:00	Closing Cocktail